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Older Teens Less Likely To Say Grace

Nationally, half of the teens in America (51%) said grace the last time they and their family sat down together for an evening meal. As teens grow older, however, grace is less often said in households where they are present. In homes where teens are ages 13 to 15, the incidence of saying grace before a typical evening meal is 57%. By the time teens turn 16, saying grace is found in only 44% of the households.

Teens who attended church during the seven-day period preceding the time of interview are the most likely to ask the Lord's blessing before supping, with 72% reporting grace was said in their household when they and their family last ate together in the evening. Only 30% of those who did not attend church gave similar reports.

Protestant youths are more likely than Catholics to have said grace, by a margin of 60% to 48%. Non-white teens (59%) are more apt to have heard grace said than are whites (49%) by a similar proportion.

Two teenage households in three in the South (66%) say grace before evening meals. Slightly over half of midwestern households (52%) ask for blessings, but about only four in 10 do so in the East (42%) or West (39%).

The question was asked in the following way:

"Thinking now of just the last time you had your evening meal together, which of the following things did you do at that time . . . said grace or a prayer before the meal?"

The findings are based on a Gallup Youth Survey study consisting of telephone interviews with a representative national cross section of 500 teenagers, 13 through 17, conducted between March 24 and April 4, 1990.

Teens Who Said Grace At Last Evening Meal

	Said Grace
NATIONAL	**51%**
Male	52
Female	51
Ages 13 to 15	57
Ages 16 to 17	44
White	49
Non-white	59
White-collar family	52
Blue-collar family	51
East	42
Midwest	52
South	66
West	39
Protestant	60
Catholic	48
Attended church last week	72
Did not attend	30

Christmas, Thanksgiving Favorite Holidays

Christmas is the overwhelming favorite holiday of Americans, with 72% naming it as first in their affections. Thanksgiving, named by 8%, is second. Easter is named by 2%, so that overall, 82% of adults name one of the holidays with religious significance as their favorite.

Less often cited are purely secular holidays such as the Fourth of July (3%), New Year's (2%), Halloween (2%), Memorial Day (1%), or Labor Day (1%).

The results are from a Gallup Poll survey among a nationwide cross-section of 1,227 adults, 18 and older, interviewed by telephone in the period of October 12 through 15, 1989.

Favorite Holiday

Christmas	72%
Thanksgiving	8
Easter	2
Independence Day	3
New Year's	2
Halloween	2
Memorial Day	1
Labor Day	1
Other	2
None, no opinion	7
	100%

Stewardship Important Aspect of Being Rich

The 1980s often have been characterized as a decade of greed during which the gap between the "have's" and "have-not's" of the United States grew larger. Most people, when asked, consider themselves to be "middle income" but show ambivalent attitudes and opinions about the rich.

Only 7% of the population classify themselves as being in an upper-income bracket, and less than 1% feel they are now rich in a material sense. The majority (59%) say they are middle income, while one person in three feels he is a lower-income person (23%) or poor (10%).

Two people in three (66%) now believe that income distribution in the U.S. should be fairer, compared to just 60% who held similar opinions in 1984. Correspondingly, the proportion of Americans who believe the percentage of their fellow countrymen who live below the poverty line is growing, has increased during the same period from 70% in 1984 to 79% in 1990.

Despite biblical injunctions about the difficulties the rich will experience upon trying to enter heaven, seven people in 10 (71%) see no difference in abilities between the rich and the poor in loving God and one's neighbors.

Only one person in three feels the rich are now doing an excellent (6%) or good job (27%) in giving back to society charitable contributions and donations. If they were to become rich themselves, however, 63% say they would view a very important aspect of their stewardship as the ability to give generously to charitable works and to help people in need.

Seven people in 10 (70%) think there is too much emphasis upon the rich and striving to become rich in America today; but, almost as many (59%), if given the choice, would also like to be rich themselves. The rich may not be envied (82%), but they are respected and admired by a majority of Americans (52%).

The results are based on telephone interviews by The Gallup Poll with a randomly-selected national sample of 1,255 adults, 18 and older, conducted May 17-20, 1990.

First of all, thinking just about your own financial situation, do you consider yourself to be rich, upper income, middle income, lower income, or poor?

	1990
Rich	*
Upper income	7
Middle income	59
Lower income	23
Poor	10
No opinion	1
	100%

Do you feel that the distribution of money and wealth in this country today is fair, or do you feel that the money and wealth in this country should be more evenly distributed among a larger percentage of the people?

	1984	1990
Distribution fair	31%	28%
Should be more evenly distributed	60	66
No opinion	9	6
	100%	100%

Would you say that the percentage of Americans living below the poverty line is increasing from year to year, or decreasing from year to year?

	1984	1990
Increasing	70%	79%
Decreasing	18	15
No opinion	12	6
	100%	100%

Is it more difficult for a rich person than a poor person to love God and one's neighbors, less difficult, or is there no difference?

	1990
More difficult	19%
Less difficult	6
No different	71
No opinion	4
	100%

How good a job do the rich in America do in terms of contributing back to society by charitable contributions, donations and the like?

	1990
Excellent job	6%
Good job	27
Fair job	42
Poor job	19
No opinion	6
	100%

Do you think there is too much, too little or about the right amount of emphasis and attention on the rich and trying to become rich in America today?

	1990
Too much emphasis	70%
Too little emphasis	6
About the right amount of emphasis	18
No opinion	6
	100%

Being rich means that you are able to do things or own things that others can't. How important is each of the following as a reason for wanting to be rich . . . To be able to contribute generously to charities and help people in need?

	1990
Very important	63%
Somewhat important	31
Not very important	5
No opinion	1
	100%

Do you envy rich people or not?

	1990
Yes, envy rich	17%
No, don't envy them	82
No opinion	1
	100%

All in all, if you had your choice, would you want to be rich, or not?

	1990
Yes, would want to be rich	59%
No	38
No opinion	3
	100%

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100 Questions and Answers: Religion in America

by

George Gallup, Jr. and Sarah Jones

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The cost is $30.00 per copy, including postage and handling. To order your copy contact the Princeton Religion Research Center, 100 Palmer Square, P.O. Box 389, Princeton, NJ 08542. You may also order by telephone (609/921-8112).

Confidence In Organized Religion Rebounds

Organized religion and the U.S. military have this in common: over the past year both have gained increased confidence from the American public. Organized religion reached its lowest point in 1989 when only a bare majority of citizens (52%) gave positive ratings to the degree of confidence they hold in it. This year, their confidence rebounded somewhat, with 56% of those polled stating that they have a great deal or quite a lot of faith in organized religion. Until 1985 organized religion was always the clear-cut leader among 10 American institutions that have been tested by the Gallup Poll since 1973. In 1986, however, for the first time it placed second to the U.S. military as the institution in which the American public maintains its greatest trust. The military in 1990 is enjoying its highest ratings since the question was first asked, with two people in three (68%) now expressing confidence in it. This represents a five percentage-point increase in positive opinion since 1989 when 63% of the survey respondents expressed similar confidence.

Over the past year public schools (45%) and the press (39%) have also registered modest gains in public approval. Losing the American public's confidence have been the beleaguered banks of the nation which slipped from 49% approval in 1988 to 36% in 1990, the U.S. Supreme Court which dropped from a high rating of 56% in 1988 to just 47% in the current year, and the U.S. Congress which slid from a 35% approval rating in 1988 to only 24% in 1990.

Organized labor, big business, and the television industry have remained relatively unchanged in the degree of confidence they have received from the U.S. public in recent years.

Ratings of institutions were obtained through the following question:

"I am going to read you a list of institutions in American society. Please tell me how much confidence you, yourself, have in each one: a great deal, quite a lot, some, or very little.

The results are based on telephone interviews conducted by the Gallup Poll with a randomly-selected national sample of 1,241 adults, ages 18 and older, during the period of August 16-19, 1990.

"Until 1985 organized religion was the clear-cut leader among . . . American institutions"

Trend—Confidence in Organized Religion

(Those who have a great deal or quite a lot of confidence in organized religion)

	%	Rank
1990	56	2nd
1989	52	2nd
1988	59	1st
1987	61	1st-tied
1986	57	2nd
1985	66	1st
1984	64	1st
1983	62	1st
1981	64	1st
1979	65	1st
1977	64	1st
1975	68	1st
1973	66	1st

Confidence in American Institutions—1990

	A great deal	Quite a lot	Some	Very little	None (vol.)	No opinion
Military	37%	31%	22%	7%	1%	2%
Church/organized religion	33	23	26	14	2	2
Public schools	21	24	34	18	1	2
U.S. Supreme Court	19	28	31	16	2	4
Newspapers	15	24	42	16	2	1
Banks	13	23	40	21	2	1
Television	12	13	41	30	3	1
Organized labor	11	16	40	25	3	5
Congress	9	15	43	28	2	3
Big business	9	16	40	28	3	4

The Bible: The Best-Read Book in America

NEW YORK—On the fiftieth anniversary of National Bible Week, celebrated November 18-25, The Princeton Religion Research Center presented to the Interfaith Luncheon hosted by the Laymen's National Bible Association, a comprehensive study of *The Role of the Bible in American Society*. Here are the highlights of the study.

The Bible undoubtedly is the most widely read book in America. Currently, 17% of adults report they read the Bible daily. An additional one person in four (23%) reads it weekly, but this latter group most probably contains some people who read it as part of weekly group religious service recitations, rather than as an individual exercise.

The Bible is read at least monthly by 13% of adults, but 25% say they read it less often than that, and 20% report they have never read it. Failure to read the Bible at all probably is more a matter of lack of faith or interest than illiteracy, as non-readers are found in about equal proportions among people of all levels of academic attainment.

A majority of Protestants are frequent Bible readers, with 24% reporting daily readership and 28% weekly readership. Only about half as many Catholics read it on a daily (7%) or weekly (16%) basis.

Among adult Bible readers, almost half say they have read all (26%) or most (18%) of the Old Testament, while a majority have read all (35%) or most (20%) of the New Testament. One person in four (24%) has read about half of the Old Testament, while 20% say they have read less than half and 11% have seen little or none of it. Similarly, 19% of adult Bible readers have read about half of the New Testament, 13% less than half, and 12% little or none of it.

Despite the impressive statistics concerning Bible reading, it is apparent that ignorance of its contents is widespread. In 1990, only half of the adults interviewed nationwide could name any one of the four Gospels of the New Testament. Just 37% could name all four, compared to 42% who were able to cite the four titles correctly in 1982.

Use of the Bible in the schools

Few people are aware of any use of the Bible in the public schools of their community. One in five believes that courses are offered in studying the major religions of the world (21%), and that school facilities are available for use by student religious groups or organizations (21%); but very few report any use of the Bible in secular classes (9%) or in elective courses in Bible studies (8%). The reported figures of incidence may, however, be somewhat understated, because young adults who of course most recently attended the schools, tend to give higher estimates of these Bible activities in the local schools.

Unlike school prayer which the U.S. Supreme Court views as a violation of the separation of church and state, these activities generally are considered permissible under First Amendment guidelines. A Gallup Poll conducted in 1986 found that three people in four or better favored having the public schools offer these studies about religion and the Bible.

The most recent results are based on telephone interviews with a randomly-selected national sample of 1,021 adults, 18 and older, conducted in November 1990.

A limited number of copies of the full 28-page report on *The Role of Bible in American Society* by George Gallup, Jr. and Robert Bezilla, are available from The Princeton Religion Research Center for $9.95, including postage and handling. The report presents a compilation of key Gallup figures and trends on Bible reading and biblical attitudes for adults and teen-agers over the years. Copies may be ordered by telephone (609) 921-8112, or by mailing your request to The Princeton Religion Research Center, P.O. Box 389, Princeton, NJ 08542.

How often do you read the Bible?

Daily or more often	17%
Weekly or more often	23
Monthly or more often	13
Less than monthly	25
Rarely or never	20
No answer	2
	100%

Will you tell me the names of the first four books of the New Testament of the Bible; that is, the Four Gospels?

Matthew	44%
Mark	40
Luke	41
John	45
Can name at least one	50
Can name all four	37

Do you happen to know whether or not the public schools of your community do the following?

	Yes	No	Don't Know
Teach about the major religions of the world	21%	39%	40%
Make facilities available after school hours for use by student religious groups or organizations	21	40	39
Use the Bible in literature, history and social study classes	9	52	39
Offer elective courses in Bible studies	8	60	32

Children Bring Love and Joy

Most adults want children, and those who have had them almost always say they would do it again if they had the choice, even though 81% of today's parents believe it is more difficult raising children today than it was in their parents' time. Only about 4% of the American public could be said to be anti-children: they do not have any, do not want any, and are glad they have not had any.

When asked to state in their own words why they have had children, here are the leading responses given by parents:

- The love and affection children bring (12%)
- Having the pleasure of watching them grow (11%)
- The joy, happiness and fun they bring (10%)
- The sense of family they create (7%)
- The fulfillment and satisfaction they bring (6%).

On the down[illegible], parents worry most about:

- The cost of raising children
- Concerns about drugs (13%)
- Worries about the world and society they will live in (5%)
- Teaching children the difference of right from wrong (3%)
- Peer pressure they will face (3%)
- Problems of adolescence and the teen-age years (3%).

Parents appear to be often torn between the ideal and the realities of raising children. Nearly two in three (63%) would consider it ideal for the father to have a job that would enable the mother to stay at home and take care of the children when they are at home. One in three (33%) feels it is best to have a family situation in which both parents have jobs and both take care of the children when they are at home (33%). Only 1% endorse the idea that the mother should be the family's breadwinner and that the father should stay at home and care for the children.

Of course the reality in today's economy is that many families do have two wage earners, making it necessary for both the mother and father to be away from home during the child-raising years. In such households, about two in three (64%) believe that all things considered, their children are just as well off even though the wife works. Dissenting are 34% who feel the children would be better off if the mother were at home and didn't work.

Beyond economic issues, there is still a division of opinion on whether or not the wife should stay home. In two-income households, 50% say that the wife should not work if money were not an issue, but 44% would still like to see the wife continue working.

When viewing the issue from the child's perspective, however, about three in four of the working couples (73%) believe that children would be better off with the mother staying at home. Disagreeing are 24% who say children are just as well off if the mother works. Undecided are 3% of the parents from two-income households.

The findings are from telephone interviews by the Gallup Poll with a randomly-selected national sample of 1,239 adults, ages 18 and older, conducted during April 19-22, 1990.

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